

Cutterman's Memorial Remarks

Good Morning Shipmates,

First, I'd like to start out thanking all those who took what was a concept and brought it to life...this memorial...I am so proud of what has been done.

There's **BMCM (ret) Bruce Bradley** who planted the seed with MECS Scott Pugh and asked about a Cutter Forces Memorial...

MECS Scott Pugh (CG-751) who was a real champion and did the heavy lifting – he spent hundreds of hours researching names and cutters in the historian's office, developing the lists of names, and working with graphic artists and vendors to create this beautiful memorial...

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

Dr. Robert Browning and **Mr. Scott Price** from the historian's office who assisted with all stages of the project and provided a space for SCPO Pugh to review historical documents...

Mr. Rob Stratton – CGHQ Graphic Artist (C4IT-HQSUP) – who formatted and organized the lists of names and ships into their present layout...

Mr. Alex Sokolovski, who is not with us today, but who worked with Senior Chief Pugh to produce the panels...

And, Captain Brian Perkins...who has taken on the challenge of setting up the Cutterman's Association...

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

We are the men and women of the United States Coast Guard. This is our chosen profession. This is our way. This is what we do.

Today, we all have solemn duty. To Honor our Profession and Respect those Shipmates who have gone before us. All of us share in the obligation to observe and practice the *manners of our profession*. You won't find these manners written up in any book, any document, or any publication. These manners are observed, taught and experienced. They are felt in the heart.

Today, we assemble to dedicate this Coast Guard Cutterman's Memorial to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving aboard Coast Guard Cutters carrying out our challenging maritime missions.

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

This memorial serves as a stark reminder that it's – people – shipmates – who gladly stepped forward to answer the call to serve. The shipmates who man our ships, as we know, are called Cutterman. They are designated by their hard-earned insignia, the Cutterman's devices.

As the Gold Ancient Mariner, I always wear my Cutterman's device with an extreme sense of pride! You can remove every one of my uniform devices except my Cutterman's device—it is the thing I value the most—not so much because of the way it was earned, but because it's a reflection of the shipmates who I have had the honor and privilege to serve with.

Like us, these lost shipmates relished the voyage – the opportunity to see sights and wonders few will ever have the privilege to gaze upon – the joy of going down to the sea in ships, to do business in its great waters, and to see the wonders of the deep...

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

Yet, they surely also relished returning home – seeing their family, friends and loved ones waiting on the pier...there are few more comforting feelings or better sights I know of...

These shipmates, however, were denied this pleasure.

On these six granite panels are 1242 names. 1241 men. One woman—the most recent addition—LTjg Jessica Hill lost on Aug. 17, 2006, during an Arctic diving accident along with BM2 Steven Duque. And whether messcooks or Commanding Officers, whether Firemen or Chiefs, today we remember them simply as Shipmates.

There are others whose names we will never know...you see, before 1917, we only recorded the name of the ship that was lost—and not the shipmates aboard... These shipmates simply Lived by the Sea, Died on it and in many cases were Buried in it –

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

So, when you pause to gaze upon these panels, soon to be affixed in our main passageway, I hope you will see not names, but rather heroes, and reflect upon their service...

Listed alongside each shipmate, you will see the name of the vessel they served in – there are 124 ships in total. Notably, 83 of the 124 vessels—67 percent—were lost in wartime. This is a solemn reminder, that we are an armed service, charged with remaining always ready to serve alongside the Navy or in support of the Department of Defense.

And, we have proudly done just that...the blood of these Coast Guardsman is what earned OUR battle streamers – bravely serving in nearly every war our Nation has fought.

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

This memorial also has another purpose. It reminds us – as we were tragically reminded again last week with the loss of ME3 Shaun Lin – that our chosen profession is hazardous. Our work is difficult, and sometimes dangerous. The sea is unforgiving—it always has been. This is why we run drills. This is why we train hard. We must remain ever-vigilant—and keep focused on our most important duty—the safety of our shipmates...

I would like to share just a few of the stories behind this memorial...

The first 10 Shipmates listed on the panel served in Cutter YAMACRAW who lost their lives on March 4, 1917, in an attempt to rescue the crew of the stranded steamer *Louisiana*.

A report published in the 1917 *Annual Report of the United States Coast Guard* states:

"In a hazardous service, such as the Coast Guard, where men must risk their lives to save others who are in perilous positions, *it is expected that occasions will arise where the rescuers themselves are lost in their brave attempts to save the unfortunate...*"

Today, of course we reject the notion – captured in our old slogan, that “*you have to go out, but you don't have to come back.*”

We now affirmatively assess risk. And, we invite our crews to jointly engage in this assessment. But even with the active use of risk assessment tools, putting our people at risk remains a necessary part of what we do. We now do it with a better understanding of the risks involved – but it's still challenging and risky.

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

In 1943, 101 crewmembers were lost aboard Cutter *Escanaba* while she was on convoy duty. There were only two survivors. Raymond O'Malley, one of the two survivors, when asked what message he would like to pass on to today's Coast Guardsmen had this to say:

Quote – ...the men and women of today are about the same as we were.

When WWII was going to begin there were men who went out to volunteer and join the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard, and they were just as courageous as they are today...***I was proud that I was a member of the Coast Guard and was out there.*** I must have made at least 20 convoys from Argentina, Newfoundland to Ireland and when you're out there, and there were days when things were so bad...with the wolf packs that you can say what you want about being a soldier being on land and fighting...but we were out on the sea....we didn't know if we were going to get torpedoed. We didn't know if we were going to get sunk. Men slept in magazines right by the guns...Every year I go to church on the 13th of June and I say a prayer

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

for the *Escanaba* that went down...and for the crew of the *Escanaba* Three the modern day Cutter, lighting candles for both ships.' END QUOTE.

Ray is unfortunately no longer with us, however, his pride in his Coast Guard service, and in the courage of Coast Guardsmen past and present, is a timeless commentary on the courage of OUR Coast Guard men and women who step forward and volunteer to serve in Coast Guard operations throughout the globe.

Today is also the 32nd anniversary of the loss of the Cutter CUYAHOGA.

Just down the Potomac, on Oct. 20, 1978, the Cuyahoga, with 29 personnel aboard, was conducting a night-time Officer Candidate School training cruise for OCS Class 6-78. At about 2100, the Cuyahoga collided with the motor vessel *Santa Cruz II* in the Chesapeake Bay and sank about two minutes later in 58 feet of water.

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

The Cuyahoga sank quickly due to massive damage to its hull and rapid flooding as the much larger *Santa Cruz II* bulldozed the cutter underwater at about 13 knots for at least one minute. The *Santa Cruz II* rescued 18 men from the water, but the remaining 11 were tragically lost.

Partially as result of this accident, and later the loss of the Cutter *BLACKTHORN*, the Coast Guard instituted more stringent controls and certifications. These include periodic examinations for deck watch officers and rigorous seamanship refresher courses for all prospective commanding officers and executive officers. This training served to Honor our Professional and Respect our Shipmates because it made us better Cutterman – to the point where in the 1990s, when we were responding to mass migrations in the Windward Passage and the Florida Straits, the fleet was never more professional—It remains so today because of our continuing commitment to Honor our Profession and Respect our Shipmates through rigorous training.

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

A memorial to honor our shipmates who lost their lives aboard CGC CUYAHOGA is located aboard TRACEN Yorktown – and a memorial service was held aboard TRACEN Yorktown this morning.

Today, this Cutterman's Memorial gives us an opportunity to honor their service...and the many others who perished serving at the sea to protect people from the sea...protect threats from the sea...and even the sea itself.

I know these lost shipmates whose lives were unfairly cut short have made it to safe harbor, and we all hope they are watching over us. It's now our turn to heed the call...to take the helm, and with an unwavering hand stand the watch...

Dedication of Cutterman's Memorial 20 October 2010

And I hope, that like Ray O'Malley, whether you are a Cutterman or a Coast Guardsman, a Coxswain, and Aviator or otherwise, that YOU are as ***proud as I am that YOU are a member of the Coast Guard, and of "being out there" serving and defending our Nation.***

As we go forth, to honor the service of these fallen Coast Guardsmen, we can draw comfort in knowing that, as it has been said, our lost shipmates have met their Pilot face to face, as they crossed the bar...

This is our chosen profession. This is our way. This is what we do. We are Coast Guardsmen. We are the men and women of the United States Coast Guard. And, proudly so.

Thank you. *Semper Paratus.*

God Bless our Service and our Country.